



Uinta Basin Railway

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Welcome to the Online Public Meeting for the Uinta Basin Railway Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Surface Transportation Board
Docket No. FD 36284



Uinta Basin Railway

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Agenda

- Overview of the Surface Transportation Board, Cooperating Agencies, the Seven County Infrastructure Coalition, and the Uinta Basin Railway
- Environmental Review Process
 - Resources Analyzed for Potential Impacts
 - Draft Environmental Impact Statement Conclusions
 - Mitigation
- More Information
- Comment Period and Meetings
- How to Make Public Comments



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Overview

- **Surface Transportation Board (Board):** federal, bipartisan, independent adjudicatory board with broad economic regulatory oversight of railroads, including construction and operation of new rail lines.
 - The Board considers both transportation merits and potential environmental impacts.
 - The Board's **Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA)** conducts the environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and related laws.
- **Cooperating Agencies:** OEA is working with the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the State of Utah's Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office to conduct the environmental review.



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Overview (cont.)

- **Seven County Infrastructure Coalition (Coalition):** project applicant proposing to construct and operate the Uinta Basin Railway.
- The Coalition proposes to construct and operate an approximately 85-mile rail line from two terminus points in the Uinta Basin near South Myton Bench and Leland Bench to an existing rail line near Kyune, Utah.
- The purpose of the proposed rail line would be to provide common carrier rail service connecting the Uinta Basin to the interstate common carrier rail network using a route that would provide shippers with a viable alternative to trucking.
- Trains on the proposed rail line primarily transport crude oil produced in the Uinta Basin, but could also carry frac sand, other proppant material, steel, machinery, or mineral and agricultural products and commodities.
- Depending on future market conditions, an estimated 3.68 to 10.52 trains per day along the proposed rail line, including loaded and unloaded trains.



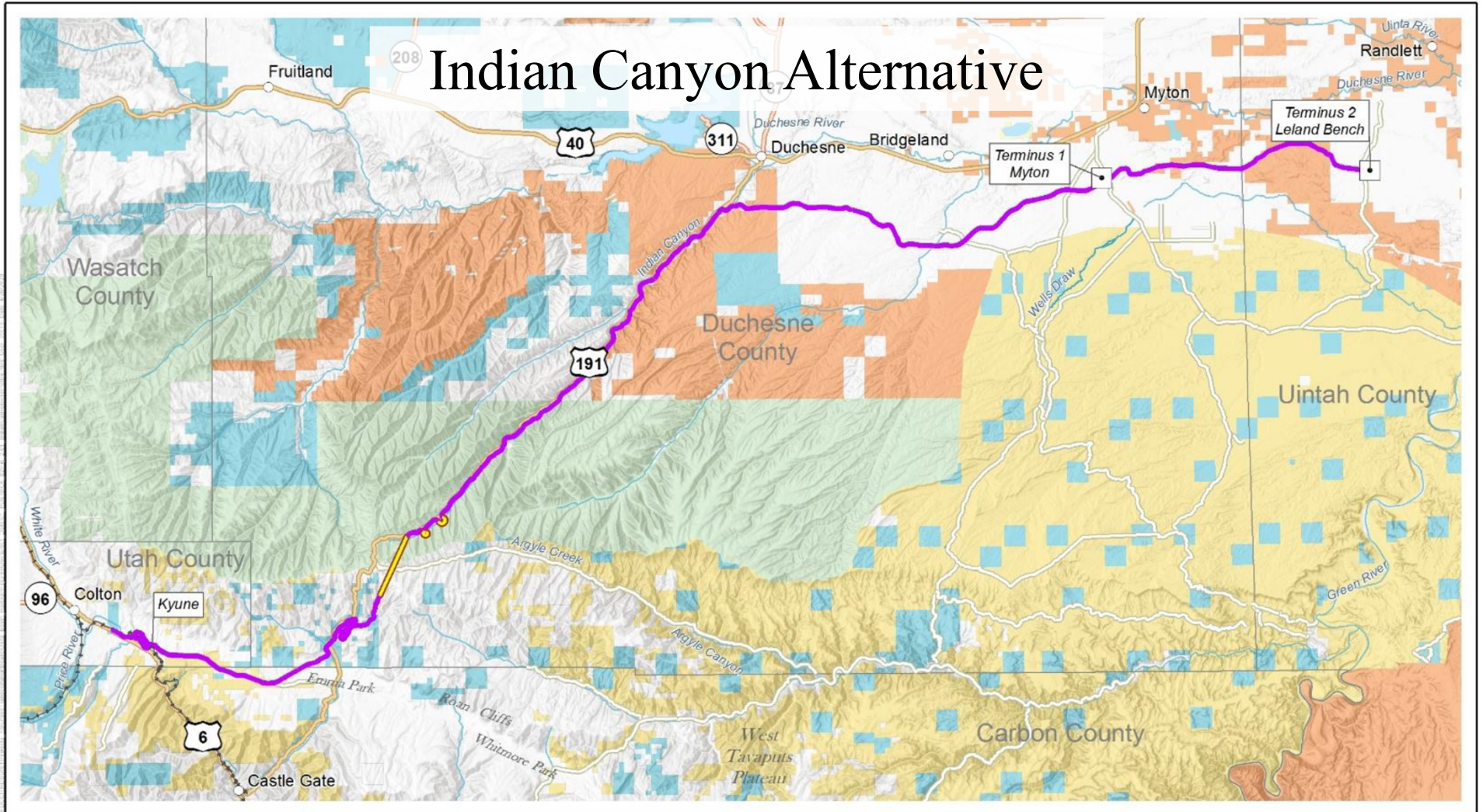
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Alternatives

- NEPA requires federal agencies to consider reasonable alternatives to a proposed action.
- In the Draft EIS, OEA analyzed three Action Alternatives that would meet the project purpose and would be feasible and practical to construct and operate:
 - Indian Canyon Alternative
 - Wells Draw Alternative
 - Whitmore Park Alternative
- OEA also considered the No-Action Alternative, which would occur if the proposed rail line were not constructed.

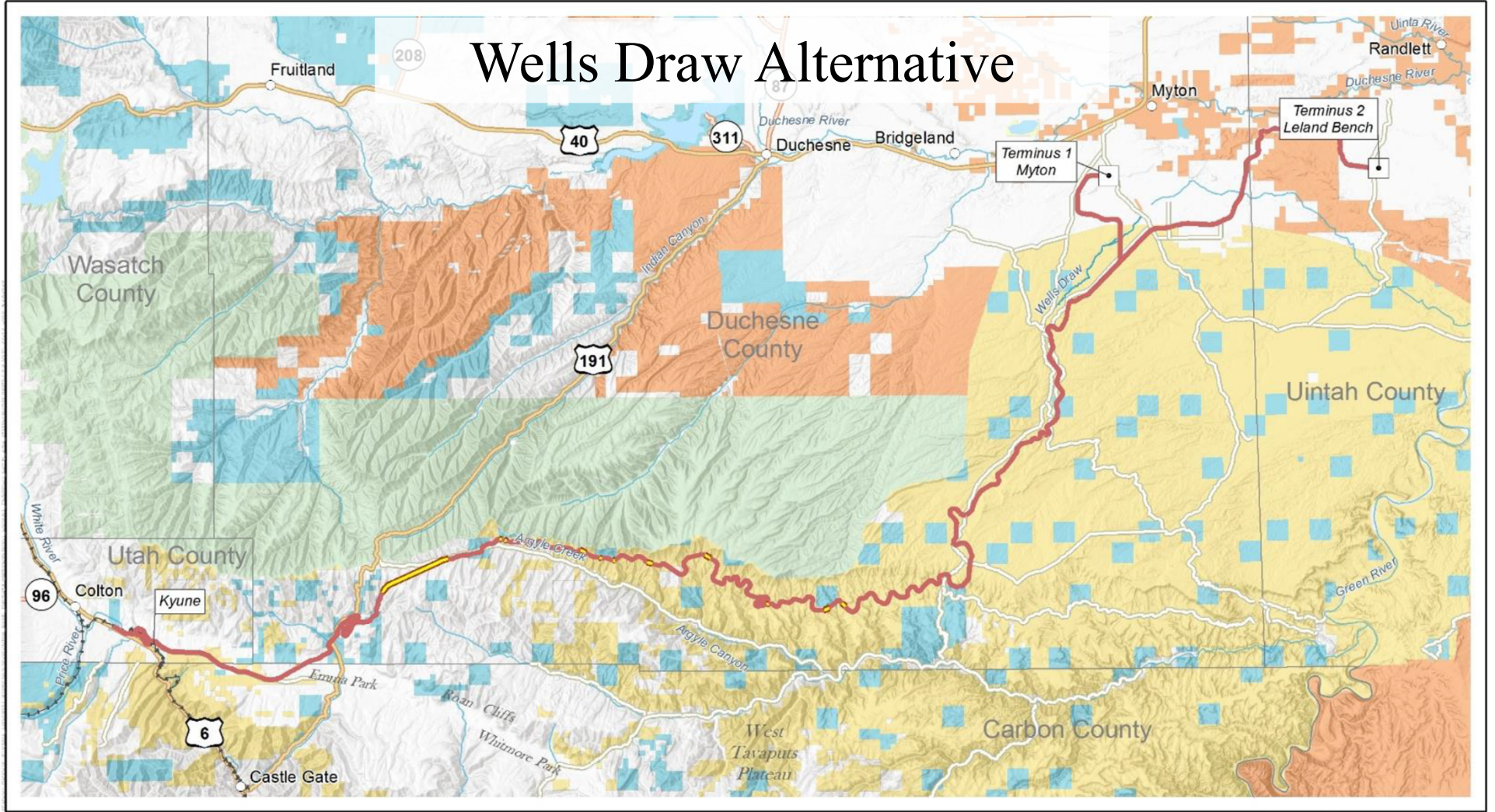
Indian Canyon Alternative



- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Indian Canyon Alternative | U.S. Hwy | Land Status |
| Terminal | State Route | Bureau of Land Management |
| Tunnel | County Road | Bureau of Reclamation |
| Existing Rail Line | Stream | Private Land |
| | Lake | State Land |
| | | Tribal Land |
| | | U.S. Forest Service |



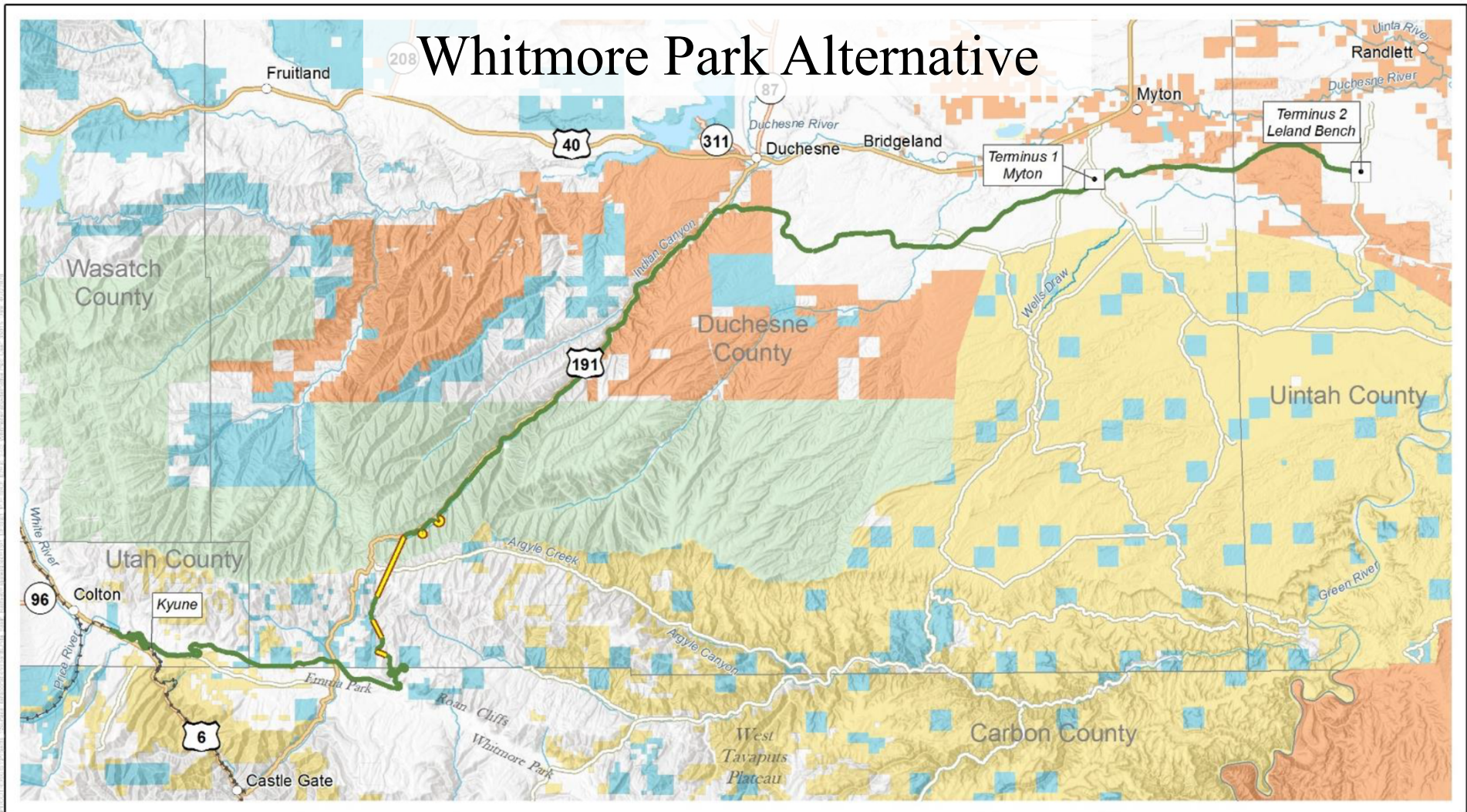
Wells Draw Alternative



- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Wells Draw Alternative | U.S. Hwy | Land Status |
| Terminal | State Route | Bureau of Land Management |
| Tunnel | County Road | Bureau of Reclamation |
| Existing Rail Line | Stream | Private Land |
| | Lake | State Land |
| | | Tribal Land |
| | | U.S. Forest Service |



Whitmore Park Alternative



- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Whitmore Park Alternative | U.S. Hwy | Land Status |
| Terminal | State Route | Bureau of Land Management |
| Tunnel | County Road | Bureau of Reclamation |
| Existing Rail Line | Stream | Private Land |
| | Lake | State Land |
| | | Tribal Land |
| | | U.S. Forest Service |





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Environmental Review Process

- Scoping
 - Agency consultation and public involvement, including six public scoping meetings in July 2019.
 - OEA developed a range of alternatives and identified topics to analyze in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.
 - OEA issued a Final Scope of Study in December 2019.
- Draft EIS
 - Analyze potential environmental effects of alternatives.
 - Develop preliminary mitigation.
 - Identify preliminary environmentally preferred alternative.
 - Establish public comment period and hold public meetings.



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Environmental Review Process (cont.)

- Final Environmental Impact Statement
 - Respond to comments on the Draft EIS.
 - OEA makes final recommendations for environmental mitigation.
- Final Decision
 - Board issues a decision to deny, grant, or grant with conditions (including environmental conditions), the Coalition's request for authority to construct and operate the proposed rail line.
 - Cooperating Agencies issue Records of Decision, if applicable.



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Resources Analyzed for Potential Impacts

- Vehicle Safety and Delay
- Rail Operations Safety
- Water Resources
- Biological Resources
- Geology, Soils, Seismic Hazards, and Hazardous Waste Sites
- Noise and Vibration
- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases
- Energy
- Cultural Resources
- Paleontological Resources
- Land Use and Recreation
- Visual Resources
- Socioeconomics
- Environmental Justice
- Cumulative Impacts



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Draft EIS Conclusions

- **Water Resources** – the proposed rail line would result in unavoidable impacts on surface waters and wetlands.
 - The Whitmore Park Alternative would permanently affect the smallest total area of surface waters and wetlands, while the Wells Draw Alternative would affect the largest area.
- **Special Status Species** – any of the Action Alternatives would cross suitable habitat for several species that are listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act and other species that are managed by federal, state, and tribal agencies.
 - The Whitmore Park Alternative would avoid or minimize impacts on greater sage-grouse relative to other Action Alternatives and would not result in significant impacts to that species.



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Draft EIS Conclusions (cont.)

- **Wayside Noise** – wayside noise would depend on factors such as train speed, train length, and number of locomotives.
 - Among the Action Alternatives, the Indian Canyon Alternative would result in the most severe noise impacts. Under the Indian Canyon Alternative, up to six residences could experience an increase in noise that would exceed the Board's thresholds for adverse noise impacts.
- **Socioeconomics** – construction and operation of the proposed rail line would result in locally significant impacts on socioeconomics.
 - Beneficial impacts would include the creation of jobs and local tax revenue.
 - Adverse impacts would include the acquisition and displacement of residences and agricultural activities on private land.



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Draft EIS Conclusions (cont.)

- **Land Use and Recreation** – any of the Action Alternatives could significantly affect land uses on public, private, or tribal lands.
 - The Indian Canyon Alternative and the Whitmore Park Alternative would each cross inventoried roadless areas within Ashley National Forest and Tribal trust land within the Ute Indian Tribe’s Uintah and Ouray Reservation.
 - The Wells Draw Alternative would cross the Lears Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern and Lands with Wilderness Characteristics on Bureau of Land Management land.
- **Tribal Concerns** – through consultation with the Ute Indian Tribe, OEA identified issues related to vehicle safety and delay, rail operations safety, biological resources, air emissions, and cultural resources as areas of concern for the tribe.



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Environmentally Preferred Alternative

- The Draft EIS concludes that the Whitmore Park Alternative would avoid or minimize environmental impacts compared to the Indian Canyon Alternative and the Wells Draw Alternative.
- OEA is preliminarily recommending that, if the Board decides to authorize the proposed rail line, the Board should only authorize the Whitmore Park Alternative.
- OEA invites comments on this preliminary recommendation and on the other conclusions in the Draft EIS.



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Mitigation

- If the Board authorizes the Coalition's request for construction and operation authority, the proposed mitigation measures in the Draft EIS could become conditions to the Board's decision.
- The Coalition has proposed 56 voluntary mitigation measures to address environmental impacts and OEA is preliminarily recommending an additional 73 mitigation measures.
- The mitigation measures are set forth in Chapter 4 of the Draft EIS.
- OEA will make its final recommendations on mitigation to the Board in the Final EIS after considering all public comments on the Draft EIS.



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Project Introduction and Updates

Project Overview

Project Map

Environmental Review Process

National Historic Preservation Act

Public Involvement

Documents & Links

Project Mailing List

Contact Us

This project website was developed and is maintained by the Surface Transportation Board, the lead federal agency responsible for preparing the Uinta Basin Railway Environmental Impact Statement. The Seven County Infrastructure Coalition has no role in determining the content of this website.

HOME PAGE

Welcome to the project website for the Uinta Basin Railway Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Project Introduction

The Seven County Infrastructure Coalition (Coalition) has filed a request with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) for authority to construct and operate an approximately 85-mile common-carrier rail line connecting two termini in the Uinta Basin near South Myton Bench, Utah, and Leland Bench, Utah, to the national rail network. The construction and operation of this proposed project has the potential to result in significant environmental impacts. Therefore, the Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) has determined that the preparation of an EIS is appropriate pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Project Updates

- **On October 30, 2020, the Board issued a Decision announcing the availability of the Draft EIS, the public comment period, and the schedule for online public meetings.**
 - The [Draft EIS is available here](#).
 - [Information on how to comment on the Draft EIS is available here](#).
 - To [register for an online meeting click here](#).
 - [Project mapping information is available here](#).
- The Coalition filed a Petition for Exemption with the Board on May 29, 2020. [Click here to view](#).
- OEA issued a Notice of Availability of the Final Scope of Study for the EIS in the Federal Register on December 13, 2019. [Click here to view](#).
- The scoping public comment period is now closed. [Click here](#) to learn more about the scoping process.
- Information from the July 2019 public scoping meetings is available to review. [Click here to view](#).
- OEA issued a Notice of Intent and Draft Scope of Study for the EIS in the Federal Register, initiating the scoping process, on June 19, 2019. To see the Notice of Intent and Draft Scope of Study, [click here](#).
- If you wish to be added to the project mailing list, [click here](#).

***First Name:**

***Last Name:**

Organization Name:

Address Line 1:

Address Line 2:

***City:**

***State Province:**

Postal Code:

Country:

Phone:

***Email:**

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Comments

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Attachment(s):

No file chosen

Use the **Browse** button(s) to find a file attachment for upload.
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Reset = Clear the form and any attachments

Note: There is a 15 Mb limit on the file size of each attachment



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

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ABOUT STB

SEARCH

The Surface Transportation Board is an independent federal agency that is charged with the economic regulation of various modes of surface transportation, primarily freight rail. The STB exercises its statutory authority and resolves disputes in support of an efficient, competitive, and economically viable surface transportation network that meets the needs of its users. For more about the Board's mission, click [here](#).

Starting Tuesday, March 17, 2020, all filings and other submissions should be made electronically. All Board decisions will continue to be available on the Board's website during this time; however, the Board's mailroom will not be accepting paper filings or providing paper copies of decisions or other materials until further notice.

Information on e-filing can be found [here](#). For more information on e-service, see the Board's decision [here](#). Parties are encouraged to check the STB website for decisions and to consent to e-service of Board decisions. If you have questions or need any assistance, please call (202) 245-0238.

For information about coronavirus (COVID-19), please go to: <https://www.coronavirus.gov>. The Board's statement regarding railroad operations can be found [here](#).



Quick Links

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- E-Filing
- Economic Data
- Environmental
- Budget Requests
- Agency Task Forces
- Rail Service Data
- STB Reauthorization Reports

Latest News | [* View all Latest News *](#)

- October 30, 2020 | [Draft Environmental Impact Statement Issued for the Proposed Uinta Basin Railway in Carbon, Duchesne, Uintah, and Utah Counties, Utah](#)
- October 28, 2020 | [Surface Transportation Board Monitoring Impacts of Hurricane Zeta](#)
- October 7, 2020 | [Surface Transportation Board Monitoring Impacts of Hurricane Delta](#)
- October 1, 2020 | [Railroad Revenue Adequacy – 2019 Determination](#)

Docket Actions of FD_36284_0

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SEVEN COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE COALITION--RAIL CONSTRUCTION & OPERATION EXEMPTION--IN UTAH, CARBON, DUCHESNE, AND UINTAH COUNTIES, UTAH

7 Decisions, 17 Filings

[Associated Decisions](#) 7 [Associated Filings](#) 17

« < 1-7 of 7 > »

| Service Date | Decision ID | Docket Number | Docket Title | Decision Type | Deciding Body | Decision Summary | Attachment |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|--|----------------------|--|--|---|
| 10/30/2020 | 50473 | FD_36284_0 | SEVEN COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE COALITION--RAIL CONSTRUCTION & OPERATION EXEMPTION--IN UTAH, CARBON, DUCHESNE, AND UINTAH COUNTIES, UTAH | Environmental Review | Director, Office Of Environmental Analysis | ISSUED A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT. | Uinta Basin Railway Draft Environmental Impact Statement Appendices.pdf |
| 10/30/2020 | 50473 | FD_36284_0 | SEVEN COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE COALITION--RAIL CONSTRUCTION & OPERATION EXEMPTION--IN UTAH, CARBON, DUCHESNE, AND UINTAH COUNTIES, UTAH | Environmental Review | Director, Office Of Environmental Analysis | ISSUED A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT. | Uinta Basin Railway Draft Environmental Impact Statement.pdf |
| 8/26/2020 | 50376 | FD_36284_0 | SEVEN COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE COALITION--RAIL CONSTRUCTION & OPERATION EXEMPTION--IN UTAH, CARBON, DUCHESNE, AND UINTAH COUNTIES, UTAH | Decision | Director Of Proceedings | INSTITUTED A PROCEEDING UNDER 49 U.S.C. § 10502(b). | 50376.pdf |
| 6/17/2020 | 50313 | FD_36284_0 | SEVEN COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE COALITION--RAIL CONSTRUCTION & | Decision | Director Of Proceedings | EXTENDED THE DEADLINE TO FILE REPLIES TO A PETITION FOR EXEMPTION TO JULY 7, 2020. | 50313.pdf |



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Comment Period and Meetings

- **45-day public comment period:** October 30, 2020 to December 14, 2020
- **Online public meetings:**
 - Monday, November 16, 2020, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. MST
 - Wednesday, November 18, 2020, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. MST
 - Thursday November 19, 2020, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. MST
 - Monday, November 30, 2020, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. MST
 - Tuesday, December 1, 2020, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. MST
 - Thursday, December 3, 2020, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. MST
- Comments must be received or postmarked by December 14, 2020 to receive full consideration in the Final EIS.



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How to Make Public Comments

- During an online meeting
 - Make an oral comment
- Submit your comment electronically
 - Project website comment page: <http://www.uintabasinrailwayeis.com>
- Mail a written comment

Joshua Wayland, PhD
Surface Transportation Board
c/o ICF
9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22031
Attention: Environmental filing, Docket No. FD 36284



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Thank You

For more information:

- Project website: <http://www.uintabasinrailwayeis.com>
- Surface Transportation Board website: <https://prod.stb.gov/>